

St Mary's Mike Smoolca Faith Witness – 11/18/2018

When I was pondering what I would do with my 2 – 3 minutes, something Thomas Merton wrote came to me. Merton wrote, “a man is better known by his questions than his answers.” So, I decided to share a question that has become increasingly important to me in these challenging and divisive times we live in. My hope is that it'll give you some insights into my Faith life. The question is, **“What is Love Asking of me...”**.

“What is Love Asking of me, today?”, “What is Love Asking of me, in this circumstance or with this person?”, “What is Love Asking of me, in this moment?”

Let me be clear, the Love I'm referring to here is the deep, caring, selfless, personally involved and committed Love that Jesus witnesses to in the Gospels.

I'm finding this a very important question as I weave my Faith and relationship with God into my ordinary life.

As I've reflected on this question, I looked at it from 3 angles:

1. Is it Christian?
2. Is it Transformational?
3. Is it catholic (with a small c), in other words, is it universal?

I'd like to share with you what I found by looking at **“What is Love Asking of me?”** from these viewpoints.

What is Love Asking of me? - Is this a Christian question?

I think most of us would agree, Jesus is quite clear about the fundamental importance of Love, and states it very succinctly in the Gospels. I'm particularly drawn to the version of that statement found in Matthew 22:36-40:

36 “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” 37 He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. **(An all-in, without limits Love)** 38 This is the greatest and the first commandment. 39 **The second is like it:** You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 **The whole law and the prophets (everything)** depend on these two commandments.”

So, it seems that Jesus just verified the importance of the question. He also gives a flavor to the Love I'm referring to; a fully committed, all-in Love, one that includes my

Love for God with my Love for myself and others. It forms the foundations of our Faith (Judaism for Jesus and, by extension Christianity.) So, it seems like I'm on solid Christian ground with this question.

Next, **What is Love Asking of me?** - Does this lead to transformation?

At the personal level: What does Love Ask of me when someone needs my time or help? What does Love Ask of me when I don't agree with someone or someone hurts me? At the larger level: What does Love Ask of me when Migrants and Refugees are threatened? What does Love Ask of me when I witness Racism or other hatred? What does Love Ask of me when the planet or life in any form or stage is threatened or disregarded? What does Love Ask of me when I see any abuse or injustice?

I've found that living these questions and opening up to answer them genuinely and then following through on the answer is transformational and often not something I can do without God's help. Living this question has changed my life in small, sometimes nuances ways and large ways as well that I don't have time to share. It continues to guide me in the actions I take in my life and it helps me to live into a clearer knowing of what Love is and how I'm called to act on it.

Finally, **What is Love Asking of me?** - Is this universal?

Though I started looking at this question from a Christian perspective, my experience in the multi-faith work I do shows me that this question has amazing significance there. I can share this question with Catholic and non-Catholic Christians, with Jews or Muslims, with Hindus, Buddhists and even with those who aren't certain of God. I find we can connect deeply and serve each other and the world by answering "**What is Love Asking of us?**" Love, I've found, is something all humanity, really all creation understands.

So, I hope my sharing this question with you has given you an insight of how I'm integrating my Faith into my life. For me being Christian, becoming transformed and being universally connected is increasingly involved in answering the simple question "**What does Love ask of me...**". Living this question in its various forms has been a way for me to be in "constant prayer" as the Gospel recommended to us today. It's proving increasingly important to aligning my life with my Faith and growing into my relationship with God.

So today, I finish up by offering you this same simple question to ponder, "**What does Love ask of you...**"?